

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2003

The Honorable Ralph Regula, Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
House Appropriations Committee
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
House Appropriations Committee
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

On behalf of the over 2.3 million Americans with epilepsy, we are writing to urge your support for increased federal funding for epilepsy research and programs, as well as for research towards the discovery of a cure at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

More than 50 million people worldwide have been diagnosed with epilepsy. Of the more than 2.3 million Americans who are affected, almost two million report limited or no relief from the existing treatments. The severe effects of epilepsy in childhood can cause developmental delays and brain damage, which may lead to a lifetime of dependency and accruing costs - both to the individual and society. The national economic impact of epilepsy exceeds an estimated \$12.5 billion annually.

We have strongly supported epilepsy funding in the past and would now encourage the intensification of that commitment by increasing current funding levels. We urge you to join us in making epilepsy research a national health care priority by supporting a \$1.65 billion funding level for the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

Additionally, we need to address the major challenges faced by those currently diagnosed with epilepsy. The Children's Health Act of 2000, which expanded the epilepsy program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and created a new epilepsy program in the Health Resources and Services Administration, can help to address those needs. We urge your support for \$12.5 million, a \$5 million increase, for the epilepsy program at the CDC and an initial \$3 million investment in demonstration projects to improve access to health care for people with epilepsy at the HRSA.

We appreciate your commitment to improving the lives of people with epilepsy and hope we can count on your support for our request.

Sincerely,

Nie D'Averonline

Stephaine P. Jones

Ben Hill

Jim McDermott

Danny H. Davis

Leonard L. Boswell

Barbara Hill

Michael C. McHale

Nice Fox

Chris V. Gufiewz

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Ronald M. Payne

Bob Filner

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Jimmy T. Coates
J. L. L.

Richard E. Neal

Jim Langerin

Jimmy Langerin
R. L. L.

Ed Case

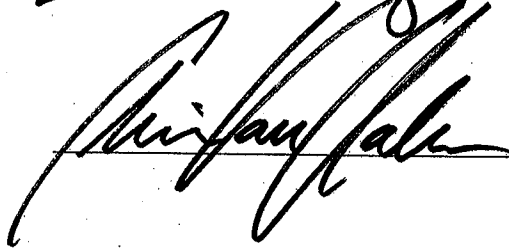
Ed Case

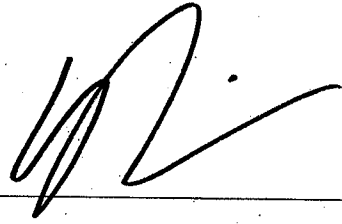
J. L. L.

Michael D.

Jo Bonner

Eliot L. Enger

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A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles A. Jazy', written over a horizontal line.

Charles A. Jazy